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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 002159

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: BEIJING POLICE KEEP TIGHT LID ON TIANANMEN
COMMEMORATION

Classified By: Classified by Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson.
Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary -----

¶1. (C) On the nineteenth anniversary of the June 4, 1989 crackdown in Tiananmen Square, security presence in the Square was substantial, and restrictions on activists remained. Security forces prevented any commemoration or displays at the family compound of former Party chief Zhao Ziyang, who was purged for his role in support of the students in 1989. PolOffs received no reports of Chinese authorities detaining dissidents or placing them under house arrest, though one dissident reported that Chinese Internet police shut down virtual "meeting rooms" participating in a June 3 online commemoration of the June 4 crackdown. End Summary.

Heavy Security in the Square -----

¶2. (C) During a visit to the Square on the morning of June 4, PolOff saw no protest activity among the sparse crowd. Security was heavier than last year, but less obtrusive, with only two Public Security vehicles patrolling the Square at any given time and traffic lanes on both sides of the Square remaining open. However, two tourist-style buses carrying People's Armed Police were parked in the center of the Square, and, keeping a more discreet profile, a number of Public Security vans were parked across the major thoroughfare to the east of the Square. Visitors to the Square were treated to a constant replay on a nearby television screen of the highly nationalistic 1999 National Day military parade commemorating the 50th anniversary of the PRC, with loud martial music, troops marching and Party leaders on the Tiananmen rostrum standing in review.

¶3. (C) Mainland media and Internet chatrooms monitored by EmbOffs carried no commentary on the anniversary.

Olympics vs. Politics in Zhao's Neighborhood -----

¶4. (C) As was the case in 2007, there was no discernible security presence or June 4 activity at the family courtyard home of former Party chief Zhao Ziyang. After supporting the students in 1989, Zhao spent the rest of his life under house arrest. His death in 2005 sparked renewed calls for a reassessment of Tiananmen. PolOff's conversation with several neighbors confirmed that Zhao's family members, including his wife, still live in the compound, but that "public security forces will not allow anyone to come and pay their respects." When PolOff asked why no public security presence was apparent, one neighbor said the officers "stay inside the compound." The neighbor volunteered that "Zhao was really great" (hen bang). Neighbors said the government

had paid for a face lift to the exterior wall and entrance of the courtyard homes along the lane "to present a good image for the Olympics." However, this government largesse did not extend to renovation of the interior quarters, which have not been redone. The exception was a wealthy resident, who, according to one neighbor, paid 600,000 RMB for a total makeover of his courtyard. "After all," she said, "this area was once filled with the houses of capitalists."

Restrictions on Dissidents Slightly Relaxed

15. (C) Continuing the trend of 2007, when restrictions on activists were relaxed somewhat for the first time in 17 years, PolOffs received no reports from contacts of dissidents being detained or placed under house arrest. Tiananmen dissident Liu Xiaobo told PolOff June 4 that security officers recently warned him to "go out less and give fewer interviews to the foreign media." Liu said a police car has been parked outside his apartment since June 1. When he ventures outside, police insist on driving Liu to and from his destination. Liu described these restrictions as normal for Tiananmen anniversaries and said the treatment he received is no worse or better than it was in 2007. Another Tiananmen dissident, Chen Ziming, told PolOff that for him security measures are unchanged compared with previous anniversaries. Chen, branded one of the "black hands" of the Tiananmen demonstrations who was released from house arrest in 2002 and had his political rights restored in 2006, said police were stationed outside his apartment June 4 just as they are every day. Earlier on June 4, an officer entered Chen's home "for a talk," but Chen described the meeting as perfunctory. Chen said he is free to leave his

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home. Chen reported that in early 2008 authorities granted him a passport for the first time, and he is planning a trip to New Zealand.

16. (C) Activist Qi Zhiyong, who lost his legs when soldiers fired on demonstrators in 1989, sent PolOff a copy of an email he disseminated memorializing those who lost their lives in the crackdown. Qi did not comment on his security situation, but in 2007 he was taken to an undisclosed location on June 1 and held incommunicado until the anniversary passed. Reuters was again permitted to interview Bao Tong, a top aide of Zhao's who is generally kept under house arrest.

17. (C) Unlike 2007, PolOffs are not aware of prominent dissidents attending small commemorative meetings without interference from the authorities. However, as in 2007, rights activists held an online memorial using Skype. Liu Anjun, who again helped to organize the Internet commemoration, said 200 people participated in the event June 13. Liu said six separate groups, some based in China and others abroad, took part in the meeting. Due to interference from Chinese Internet police, Liu said four of the six Skype "meeting rooms" designated for the event were shut down. For the past week, Liu told PolOff, he has been more closely followed by security officers but otherwise free to move about.
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